

1

INTRODUCTION

President Obama, in one of his most significant speeches since taking office, [presented] an ambitious vision—one that eschews a muscle-bound foreign policy, dominated by the military and intelligence services, in favor of energetic diplomacy, foreign aid and a more measured response to terrorism.¹

[f]or all the focus on the use of force, force alone cannot make us safe. We cannot use force everywhere. . . . Foreign aid is one of the least popular expenditures—even though it amounts to less than one percent of the federal budget. But foreign assistance cannot be viewed as charity. It is fundamental to our national security and any sensible long-term strategy to battle extremism.²

An Obama administration plan to change the way the United States distributes its international food aid has touched off an intense lobbying campaign by a coalition of shipping companies, agribusiness and charitable groups who say the change will harm the nation's economy and hamper efforts to fight global hunger. . . . The only thing getting in the way is politics and special interest.³

Motivation and Focus

“Politics Stops at the Water’s Edge.” This popular adage stands for the idea that when it comes to foreign policy, American political leaders should speak with one voice—a distinction from the cacophony that marks domestic policy making. Yet as we demonstrate in this book, while there are times when political leaders do appear unified on foreign policy, there are just as many examples of when foreign policy debate looks much more like a contentious domestic policy discussion. Sailing the water’s edge is what our political leaders do.

The above quotations highlight the main purpose of this book, which is to analyze the process of making American foreign policy. How is foreign policy made in the United States? And why is it made that way? American leaders have a wide range of policy instruments available to them, from foreign aid to sanctions to airstrikes. We study how and why they choose a particular set of foreign policy instruments to address a given international problem or opportunity. This choice of policy instruments is important because it affects the ultimate outcome of American involvement in foreign affairs.

1 Landler and Mazzetti, 2013.

2 Obama, 2013.

3 Nixon, 2013.

CHAPTER 1

Our study focuses on domestic politics and the role of the president. American political institutions play a crucial role in how policy is made in the United States. The powerful position of Congress and the salience of interest groups and public opinion critically influence how presidents make foreign policy. We seek to understand this process using rigorous theory and systematic empirical evidence.

The United States can engage with other countries in a wide variety of ways. Indeed, a major change in American diplomacy in the twentieth century was the development of different types of policy instruments, such as foreign aid and international trade agreements. Today, US foreign policy employs myriad policy instruments, including immigration, economic and military aid, monetary interventions, international trade, sanctions, diplomacy, military force deployment, and domestic defense spending. Why do American leaders sometimes choose trade agreements and other times foreign aid? More generally, why do American leaders choose the specific set of foreign policy instruments considering the wide range of tools available to them? Given America's many resources, American presidents have many different policies they could use in any situation, but they choose one particular set. Why is this set chosen from among the many available options? We offer a view that rejects the claim that politics affects only domestic policy making, i.e., that "politics stops at the water's edge." Instead, domestic politics affects elements of foreign policy and does so differentially. Politics thus occurs all along the water's edge, with the use of some policy instruments more constrained by domestic politics than others.

Consider a few cases. From about 1985 onward, the United States has been trying to keep North Korea from first developing and then deploying nuclear weapons. More recently, it has been trying to make North Korea relinquish these weapons. In this long and so far unsuccessful process, US leaders have considered and eventually used many different foreign policy instruments: trade sanctions, foreign aid, military maneuvers and troop movements, negotiations, international cooperation and inspections, silence and unwillingness to negotiate, threats of force, promises of recognition and reassurance, financial inducements, supplies of oil, covert operations to destabilize the government, and other tools of statecraft. And throughout the Clinton, G. W. Bush, and Obama administrations, there has been constant debate over which instruments to use when and how much.⁴

To simplify, two camps have often formed—one advocating negotiations and positive inducements and the other counseling sanctions and the use of force. While the United States has yet to use direct force, the coercive strategy seems to have generally prevailed over the more cooperative one.

4 The basis of this discussion is from Sigal, 1998; Nincic, 2010; Cha, 2012; and Henriksen, 2012.

INTRODUCTION

Part of the reason for this has been domestic politics in the United States. As Sigal notes in his study of US policy toward North Korea, “Coercive bargaining is the natural inclination of the US government. A stern negotiating record suppresses the domestic dispute that would be associated with any explicit political accommodation with North Korea.”⁵ Efforts at using positive inducements, such as economic aid and trade, have often found bitter opposition within the United States. And this opposition—often from Republicans—has hamstrung presidents, especially Democratic ones. For instance, Clinton’s engagement policy resulted in the 1994 Agreed Framework, which expanded diplomatic relations and economic ties including energy assistance to the North in exchange for shutting down its plutonium production facilities. Facing domestic criticism and North Korean intransigence, the Bush administration once in office radically changed policy, ending the Framework Agreement, halting oil shipments, enacting sanctions, and contemplating military interdiction.⁶ This case illustrates that when presidents face international problems, they have many instruments available to address them—but the ultimate choice of policy often depends heavily on domestic politics in the United States.

Another interesting case is Iraq. After the 1991 Operation Desert Shield freed Kuwait from Iraq’s invasion, the US government left Saddam Hussein and his party in control following a negotiated cease-fire agreement. Over the next twelve years, the United States had to contend with this decision. Here too the United States feared that Hussein would develop and deploy weapons of mass destruction. Other concerns about Hussein’s behavior included his treatment of Kurds and Shias, his threats against Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and the oil pipelines, and his belligerence toward Israel. The G. H. W. Bush, Clinton, and G. W. Bush administrations all discussed using, and finally ended up employing, many different foreign policy instruments to contain Hussein. Many of these were of the coercive variety. The United States and other countries imposed strong economic sanctions, used the diplomacy of deterrence, imposed no-flight zones within the country, developed covert operations to topple the regime, and opened Iraq to inspections by the UN. Negotiations with Hussein to disarm and end his international provocations continued but achieved little. Clinton’s later efforts to resolve the Iraq problem without the use of force were criticized by Republicans.⁷ In 2003, the G. W. Bush administration decided to invade Iraq and deposed Hussein in pursuit of the regime’s purported weapons of mass destruction. Apparently the sanctions and other policies had been more successful than anticipated and made Hussein’s reacquiring these more difficult than anticipated.

5 Sigal, 1998, p. 170.

6 Ogden and Anderson, 2008.

7 Henriksen, 2012, pp. 49–54.

CHAPTER 1

As in the case of North Korea, the US government considered many policy instruments to deal with Hussein; they ended up using coercion and military force by and large. In part this was a reaction to Hussein and the belief that his behavior was dangerous, but it was also conditioned by domestic politics, where military means tended to be politically easier for the president to employ.⁸

A more recent case showing these domestic constraints involves US policy toward Pakistan. Just prior to 2001, US policy toward Pakistan emphasized sanctions and limited engagement in response to the nuclear tests and military coup in the late 1990s. Following the 9/11 terror attacks in the United States, the Bush administration changed direction and sought to make Pakistan an ally. After a meeting with President Musharraf, Bush agreed to seek \$1 billion in debt relief, greatly expanded economic and geopolitical aid, and reduced trade barriers to Pakistani goods, especially textiles.⁹ Bush was able to secure debt relief from Congress, but he had a much harder time getting the economic aid funds and trade liberalization that he desired. Congress approved substantial geopolitical aid but in the end refused to grant greater trade access. The United States and Pakistan have also been unable to sign a free trade agreement or a bilateral investment treaty.¹⁰ Hence, despite being an important strategic ally, the US government has been unable to combine this with more liberalized trade with Pakistan and has faced continuing pressures to reduce economic aid. Although immediately following 9/11 some efforts were made, trade liberalization on products that would threaten textile producers was staunchly opposed.¹¹ President George W. Bush and the Pakistani government wanted to open American markets to Pakistani trade, but were unable to because of congressional and interest group resistance; domestic interests in the United States worked to prevent further trade liberalization with Pakistan, undercutting US foreign policy goals.¹²

Another case that we develop at length in chapter 7 concerns US policy toward Sub-Saharan Africa. After the end of the Cold War and apartheid in South Africa, the US government had the opportunity to reshape its policy toward the region, which suffered from too much conflict, too little democratization, and too little development. The Clinton administration wanted to engage with the countries in the region to address these prob-

8 As Douglas Kriner notes, *ex ante*, presidents may pay few domestic costs for military action. But if those deployments last long and do not appear successful, the domestic costs and Congress's involvement may grow greatly. Sometimes presidents can and do anticipate this; other times they appear not to. Kriner, 2010.

9 Shah, 2006.

10 Iqbal, 2014.

11 Pomper, 2001.

12 Brulliard, 2010.

INTRODUCTION

lems; thus the president decided at first to use foreign aid as a main element of his policies toward Africa. In this he was frustrated time and again by a Republican-controlled Congress that opposed development aid. Unable to pursue his goals via aid, Clinton shifted to trade policy. With Republicans in Congress favoring trade over aid, this choice became easier for him to advance. The African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA), signed into law on May 18, 2000, unilaterally expanded access to the US market for African exports. With aid policy restricted by Congress, Clinton pushed ahead with a trade strategy, though even this was difficult as evidenced by the many years of domestic political wrangling over AGOA. Clinton then turned to a strategy that relied more heavily on military engagement and began to build the military footprint of the United States in Sub-Saharan Africa in the late 1990s.

This process continued under President George W. Bush. During his presidency, the 2001 terrorist attacks in the United States and the global war on terror (GWOT) accelerated the movement toward military involvement in Sub-Saharan Africa, finally establishing AFRICOM, a Unified Combatant Command for the continent. AFRICOM represents the militarization of US policy in the region. Bush was also able to increase aid to the continent, although never in the full amounts he desired. The Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) and the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) were policy innovations that were necessary to induce Congress to resume substantial aid to the region, and Congress became deeply involved in shaping these aid operations over time. Bush also pushed trade policy forward, revising and expanding AGOA several times. Again he faced domestic resistance to making AGOA an even larger element of US policy, as we describe at length in chapter 7. Thus, as with the Clinton administration, the Bush administration also ended up substituting military engagement in place of greater aid and international trade due to American domestic political pressures.

Of course, these cases are but a very small sample of the policy choices the US government has made in its approach to foreign countries and international problems. Indeed, there is a large literature describing American foreign policy.¹³ The purpose of this book is to explain US foreign policy in a rigorous fashion. As Jervis notes, many studies of foreign policy, especially of the United States, tend to be descriptive or prescriptive.¹⁴ Instead, we offer an analytical and explanatory study. We use multiple methods to

13 As a recent description of US policy toward Iran notes, "Over the years the US has shown considerable ingenuity in its efforts to slow Iran's production of nuclear fuel: it has used sabotage, cyberattacks, and creative economic sanctions. Now, mixing face-saving diplomacy and innovative technology, negotiators are attempting a new approach." Sanger, 2014, p. A4.

14 Jervis, 2005, p. 5.

CHAPTER 1

explain fundamental aspects of American foreign policy. Case studies, quantitative methods, text analysis, and surveys all inform our research. Such an approach is rare in this area, but it is important in order to better understand policy choices and their outcomes. Throughout we try to connect our findings to important descriptive and prescriptive accounts of American foreign policy.

Core Contributions

Governments have many policy instruments they can use to address foreign relations, but they must contend with the fact that domestic politics matters for foreign policy. American presidents have to negotiate and interact with Congress and interest groups to enact the foreign policies they prefer. Different policy instruments have different politics associated with them. Two aspects are very important in shaping the domestic politics that affect foreign policy: the nature of the distributional impact that different policies have and the degree of ideological divisions. The extent of distributive politics also affects the asymmetry of information about a particular policy between the president and Congress. These features affect how powerful the president will be, and thus whether he can pursue his internationalist agenda.

One basic but fundamental point we make is that foreign policy needs to be understood in terms of the different policy instruments it comprises. These different tools vary in their utility and their impact on a given international problem, but they also vary considerably in how they affect domestic groups. The distinct politics that shape different policy instruments is key to understanding what policies are chosen and why. The domestic politics of foreign policy accounts for why we sometimes see the militarization of US foreign policy, by which we mean defining foreign issues as military ones, and thus letting military planning and military tools dominate all aspects of foreign policy making.

Our study is progressive in a number of ways. First, we synthesize and further develop important research in a number of different areas, from the “two presidencies” theory in American politics to the open economy politics literature in comparative and international political economy. We focus on a wide variety of domestic actors, including the public, bureaucracies, interest groups, the executive branch, and Congress. Each of these actors has important implications for the president’s ability to implement an internationalist grand strategy. We extend the literature on foreign policy issue areas by focusing on specific policy instruments and then theorizing about what makes these instruments different and showing how this affects the fungibility of power resources for a nation. We also unpack the common idea of “high” and “low” politics in foreign policy studies. In addition, our

INTRODUCTION

study highlights differences across foreign policy instruments rather than temporal changes in American foreign policy. Finally, we present a systematic study of American foreign policy. We use multiple types and sources of data to develop a more convincing argument about presidential power and foreign policy. We analyze hundreds of thousands of lobbying reports, data on presidential and congressional budgetary politics, roll call voting, data on the design of bureaucracies, public opinion data, and case studies. Thus our analysis covers a broad set of relevant institutions. Our ability to bring together such a diverse range of data about many different political institutions is unique in the study of American foreign policy, but is also rare in other areas of political science.

What Is Foreign Policy?

Foreign policy is the means by which a sovereign nation interacts with other sovereign nations and non-state actors outside its borders. Foreign policy consists of many different policy instruments. A country can engage with other nations and non-state actors operating beyond its borders in a wide variety of ways. Today the US government employs a gamut of foreign policy instruments, including immigration, economic and geopolitical aid, international trade, sanctions, military spending, and military force. We show how these policy instruments have different politics associated with them. In turn these politics influence the ability of the president to implement the policies and grand strategies he desires.¹⁵

Other scholars have examined related questions using a broader conceptualization which focused on issue areas rather than policy instruments. This literature shares a number of our intuitions and emphases.¹⁶ As scholars in

15 We generated a list of all such policy instruments from a wide-ranging review of textbook accounts of US foreign policy. These instruments emerged as key ones and they cover considerable ground. They are also instruments that are often directly linked to decision makers, agencies, in the government, which facilitates their analysis. We do not take up “diplomacy,” which refers to the actions and signals sent by a country to others. While diplomacy is important in its own right, many of the instruments that diplomacy refers to relate to our core policy instruments. Hence, this book examines the implications of domestic politics for diplomacy, but is not a definitive treatment of this broad subject.

16 There are several examples of defining issue areas in abstract terms. James Rosenau defines an issue area as a cluster of values, the allocation of which through policy choices leads the actors affected to differ greatly over either the way in which the values should be allocated or the levels at which the allocations should be authorized and that the actors engage in distinctive behaviors designed to mobilize support for their particular values. Robert Keohane defines issue areas as problems about which policy makers are concerned and are determined by the “extent to which governments regard sets of issues as closely interdependent and treat them collectively. Decisions made on one issue must affect others in the issue area, either

CHAPTER 1

this tradition, we think the key issue areas are development, international economic relations, diplomatic relations, and military defense.¹⁷ Each of our policy instruments maps into one or more of these issue areas. For example, economic aid most clearly operates in the issue area of economic development. At times, these instruments can affect multiple issue areas. For example, economic aid can contribute to both development abroad and diplomatic relations. Or a trade agreement with an important ally might contribute to development, international economic relations, and diplomatic ones. Our theory helps to explain the different politics around each instrument, but also the politics of selecting a portfolio of policy instruments. Thus our analysis builds on but disaggregates further this more traditional focus on issue areas in foreign policy. Indeed, the political differences across foreign policy instruments are critically important as they shape the long-term trajectory of American policy.

Our focus on foreign policy instruments is more specific and granular compared to earlier work on issue areas. This disaggregation is important because foreign policy instruments that primarily affect one issue area may have very different politics.¹⁸ Our focus on economic aid, international trade, immigration, geopolitical aid, sanctions, domestic military spending, and foreign military deployments reveals the politics around foreign policy more clearly compared to the traditional issue area literature. Furthermore, as we discuss later, our focus on instruments lets us connect with the literature on policy substitution in a more direct manner. Finally, our focus is less on changes in the determinants of American foreign policy over time, but more squarely on understanding differences across policy instruments.

through functional links or through regular patterns of bargaining.” According to William Potter, this means that different issue areas evoke participation in the decision-making process from different actors. Rosenau, 1966, p. 81; Keohane, 1983, p. 525; Potter, 1980, p. 407. Also see Zimmerman, 1973; Evangelista, 1989; Gowa, 1998.

17 Similar lists of “issue areas” have also been generated by other scholars. For example, Brecher, et al. divide issue areas into military-security, political-diplomatic, economic-developmental, and cultural-status. Brecher, Steinberg, and Stein, 1969.

18 For example, one might aggregate military spending with other military instruments like geopolitical aid and deployments because they relate to the same issue area. We show how domestic military spending, which includes funding for bases and contracts for military weapons programs, has distinct politics surrounding it compared to geopolitical aid and foreign military deployments. Defense spending is crucial to American military strength and as such is a vital element of deterrence. For example, “the political aim of military preparations is to make the actual application of military force unnecessary by inducing the prospective enemy to desist from the use of military force.” Morgenthau, 1960, p. 30. But defense spending also has substantial distributional consequences, and involves an extremely assertive Congress. Take, for example, the recent push for major new spending on overhauling the US nuclear program. While Obama wanted to downsize the arsenal, Congress pushed for much higher spending in part because of the substantial district level spending it would generate, as evidenced by press releases by legislators like Lamar Alexander. Alexander, 2014; Broad and Sanger, 2014.

INTRODUCTION

Many international relations theories suggest that the constraints on presidents and foreign policy lie elsewhere, mainly in the international system and other countries. Realism, for instance, argues that countries behave according to their relative power positions and the threats that other states pose to them.¹⁹ But realism also admits that for a better understanding of foreign policy, one has to look not only at these two components but also at *the ability of leaders to extract and direct resources from their societies to foreign policy ends*.²⁰ We focus on the latter element here, making our argument compatible with realism. Indeed, our theory helps realist claims to be more specific by considering when and how the domestic political system deploys resources to address foreign policy ends.²¹

Extracting and directing resources from their societies to foreign policy ends depends in the US case on the president's ability to get his policies through Congress. A government needs tax revenues, war materiel, and an extensive workforce to engage internationally using a wide gamut of foreign policy instruments.²² To a great extent, then, the president's ability to obtain his desired foreign policy depends on negotiations with Congress as well as public opinion and interest group support. So we ask under what conditions the president can get the resources he needs to fashion foreign policy in the direction he desires. This varies a great deal by policy instrument, not so much because of factors like presidential popularity, economic conditions, or external pressures, but, we argue, as a result of the political character of the policy instruments that are involved. Other scholars have noted that power resources may not be fungible across issue areas and policy instruments, and we show why domestic politics may be one reason for this.²³ When political leaders cannot substitute one policy instrument for another, they face a problem similar to the lack of fungibility of power resources on the international level.

19 Waltz, 1979; Walt, 1998.

20 Walt, 1998; Snyder, 2002; Jervis, 2005; Taliaferro, Lobell, and Ripsman, 2009.

21 "Once raised, the notion that international power analysis must take into account the ability of governments to extract and direct the resources of their societies seems almost obvious, and in fact it simply involves incorporating into international relations theory variables that are routine in other subfields of political science." Rose, 1998, p. 161.

22 As one scholar notes more specifically about military policy, "because the state must negotiate with domestic actors for access to these societally controlled resources, our attention is directed toward state-society relations, that is, toward the process by which the state attempts to mobilize these resources. Thus, when the state participates in foreign conflict, it engages in two kinds of battles: the defense of the country's borders against foreign adversaries and the struggle with society for access to its desired resources. Consequently, the state's war preparation strategies are a function of both its objectives in the international and domestic arenas and the socioeconomic constraints on its actions." Barnett, 1990, p. 535.

23 Keohane and Nye, 1977; Baldwin, 1986; Keohane, 1986.

CHAPTER 1

Presidential Power in Foreign Policy

The main focus of this book is presidential power in US foreign policy making. Presidential power is defined as the president's ability to exert "influence over all the various doings of government: writing policy, designing the administrative state, interpreting and then implementing the law, or any combination thereof."²⁴ This is a broad conception of power that focuses on outcomes and the president's ability to achieve specific outcomes that would not otherwise occur in the absence of his actions. Neustadt in his classic definition of presidential power argues that it is the power to persuade. And we agree: through persuasion in part, the president comes to influence the "doings of government."²⁵ But we move beyond this argument about persuasion to also look at structural sources of power. For example, in chapter 6, we examine how the structure of presidential control over bureaucracies influences presidential power.

The president and presidential power are important because the executive branch is the place where the external pressures and constraints from the rest of the world are most clearly registered; it is also often the main source of American responses to those pressures. The president and the executive branch are the main conduits into the US political process for international influences on the one hand and out to the broader world for American foreign policy responses on the other. The president operates at the fulcrum of the two-level game that foreign policy exemplifies.²⁶ The president's primary responsibility is to guard American interests, and his competence in doing so is an important factor affecting his popularity and re-electability.

Some studies of American foreign policy make it seem as if the president is the sole force devising policy and that he can implement whatever policies he wants.²⁷ As Krasner wrote in a seminal book, "For US foreign policy the central state actors are the President and Secretary of State and the most important institutions are the White House and State Department. What distinguishes these roles and agencies is their high degree of insulation from specific social pressures and a set of formal and informal obligations that charge them with furthering the nation's general interests."²⁸ These studies view the president and executive branch as likely to dominate foreign pol-

24 Howell, 2013, p. 13.

25 Neustadt, 1960. Others have argued that presidents have power less through persuasion than through "going public." Kernell, 1993. Others dispute this claim. Edwards, 2003. And others see presidential power as varying more with the external conditions, or the political environment. Schlesinger, 2004. See, e.g., Skowronek, 2008.

26 Milner, 1997.

27 Krasner, 1978; Ikenberry, Lake, and Mastanduno, 1988; Legro, 2005; Brooks and Wohlforth, 2008.

28 Krasner, 1978, p. 11.

INTRODUCTION

icy and able to make autonomous choices; i.e., they are able, as Krasner long ago put it, to “defend the national interest.”²⁹

One reason for this view is that the president and the executive branch are often assumed to be more immune to public and/or interest group pressure than the legislative branch is. Indeed, studies suggest that Congress is much more susceptible to domestic pressure from public opinion and interest groups than is the executive branch, but this makes Congress a primary vehicle for injecting these internal pressures into the foreign policy process.³⁰ This heavy focus on the executive overlooks Congress, the bureaucracy, interest groups, and the public, all of whom may play important roles in shaping foreign policy. Rather than neglect these actors, we place them squarely into the foreign policy-making picture.

Previous work in American politics also makes the claim that the executive branch and the president are dominant in foreign policy. The literature on the “two presidencies” is one example of this.³¹ The two presidencies literature argues that because of the requirements of secrecy, timeliness, and information, presidents are more able to set the agenda in foreign than domestic policy and to move forward on it without congressional interference. It is as if there were two separate presidencies. A number of other studies have extended this argument.³²

Recently, Canes-Wrone, Howell, and Lewis used new data to show that there exists a difference in presidential power between domestic and foreign policy issues.³³ In chapters 5 and 6 we use their data to show that presidential control varies significantly among foreign policy instruments, with some being much more like domestic policy ones. Other studies have also raised questions about the two presidencies, finding limited, if any, support for the claims and showing that presidents’ abilities to gain support in Congress on foreign policy issues is often quite constrained.³⁴ Hence the debate

29 See also Krasner, 1972; Art, 1973; and Wildavsky, 1991.

30 Jacobs and Page, 2005, p. 108.

31 Wildavsky, 1966; Wildavsky, 1969; Peppers, 1975; LeLoup and Shull, 1979; Sigelman, 1979; Lee, 1980; Shull and LeLoup, 1981; Sigelman, 1981; Zeidenstein, 1981; Cohen, 1982; Carter, 1985; Carter, 1986; Edwards, 1986; Fleisher and Bond, 1988; Oldfield and Wildavsky, 1989; Renka and Jones, 1991a; Renka and Jones, 1991b; Shull, 1991; Sullivan, 1991; Canes-Wrone, Howell, and Lewis, 2008.

32 Others have asserted that the president dominates the policy process when it comes to the use of force and have noted the “imperial presidency” at least in military policy. Schlesinger, 1973; Hinckley, 1994; Meernik, 1994; Peterson, 1994; Fisher, 1995; Gowa, 1998; Gowa, 1999; Rudalevige, 2005. Howell, as well as Howell, Jackman, and Rogowski, show that during war, presidents seem to get more deference from Congress and are able to build support for their policies more easily. Howell, 2011; Howell, Jackman, and Rogowski, 2013.

33 Canes-Wrone, Howell, and Lewis, 2008.

34 Peppers, 1975; LeLoup and Shull, 1979; Sigelman, 1979; Fleisher and Bond, 1988; McCormick and Wittkopf, 1990; Howell and Pevehouse, 2005; Howell and Pevehouse, 2007; Kriner, 2010; Howell, 2011.

CHAPTER 1

over the power of the president in foreign policy, and especially relative to domestic policy, continues.³⁵

Other scholarship has examined the role of Congress in foreign policy.³⁶ Our research and these other studies show that, domestically, the president cannot always get what he wants in terms of foreign policy.³⁷ In fact, one piece of our data points out that close to a third of the time when the president endorses a crucial foreign policy vote, he is unsuccessful in obtaining congressional approval. This represents a small slice of foreign policy actions in the United States (the president often does not take a position on congressional votes on foreign policy, and some policies do not get voted on), but it should give pause to those who believe the president commands American foreign policy. Moreover, this is the average for all of our foreign policy votes, and for each policy instrument the rate of congressional disapproval varies greatly. Thus, presidents do face domestic constraints on their foreign policy choices. We explain when and why presidents are unable to realize their preferences for foreign policies.

Our project then moves beyond this simple divide between domestic and foreign policy-making processes by arguing that presidential power over foreign policy depends on the policy instrument and his relations with interest groups, Congress, and the public within it. Thus our focus is on the factors that allow presidents to have more influence over some policy instruments than others. In doing so, we will abstract from, or control for, many of the variables offered in the previous literature for the factors that increase or decrease presidential power.³⁸ We focus less on changes over time and much more on differences across foreign policy instruments.

35 Past research has also focused on other factors such as his popularity. See, e.g., Rivers and Rose, 1985; Rohde and Simon, 1985. Others conclude that its impact is marginal. Bond and Fleisher, 1984; Edwards, 1989; Bond and Fleisher, 1990. Again others consider economic conditions. Hibbs, 1982; Powell and Whitten, 1993; Lewis-Beck and Paldam, 2000; Dorussen and Taylor, 2002; Duch and Stevenson, 2008. And others look at war. Howell, 2011; Howell, Jackman, and Rogowski, 2013.

36 For example, Lindsay and Ripley, 1992; Lohmann and O'Halloran, 1994; Trubowitz, 1998; Howell and Pevehouse, 2007. An earlier literature on the competition between Congress and the president over foreign policy as suggested by Lindsay and Ripley includes Franck, 1981; Spanier and Noguee, 1981; Rourke, 1983; Johnson, 1984; Muskie, Rush and Thompson, 1986; Warburg, 1989; Mann, 1990; McCormick and Wittkopf, 1990; Caldwell, 1991; Thurber, 1991; Wirls, 1992.

37 Howell and Pevehouse, 2007; Mearsheimer and Walt, 2007.

38 Other literature focuses on presidential strategies for maximizing his influence. As Jackman points out, "An extensive literature has explored the different governing tools presidents use to pursue their policy objectives. . . . A variety of strategic tools have been found to influence policy, including: proposing a legislative program (for a recent review, see Beckmann, 2010); centralizing policy-formulation within the executive branch (Moe, 1985; Rudalevige, 2002); politicizing the bureaucracy through the appointments process (Lewis, 2008); 'going public' with an issue (Canes-Wrone, 2006); vetoing legislation passed by congress (Cameron,

INTRODUCTION

Descriptively, our position is closest to the “intermestic” account of US foreign policy.³⁹ The president interacts strategically with legislators, interest groups, and other domestic actors in designing his policies. Congress, interest groups, and the public constrain the president in foreign policy, but, crucially, the extent of this constraint varies across policy instruments. Some foreign policy instruments have characteristics that heighten or lessen the president’s ability to influence policy choices. Likewise, legislators face different incentives for each policy instrument. The need to win elections forces presidents and legislators to contemplate the domestic consequences of different types of foreign policy choices.

As discussed previously, the importance of issue areas in politics—which the policy instruments we study relate to and affect—has long been acknowledged.⁴⁰ In thinking about foreign policy, Rosenau wrote, “Systematic analyses of the functioning of all types of political systems—from local to national to international on the geographic scale and from party to legislative to executive at the functional level—are also converging on the finding that different types of issues elicit different sets of motives on the part of different actors in a political system.”⁴¹ However, as he and others noted, one cannot let the plethora of issue areas overwhelm systematic theoretical analysis, which depends on identifying their key features, an important step we take that is facilitated by focusing on policy instruments.⁴²

Many scholars focus on how the cost and benefits of a policy are felt domestically. Like them, we too examine how the distribution of costs and benefits of policies affect the politics around different instruments. Others have pointed to a realm of “high politics” and one of “low politics” in foreign policy.⁴³ Others, like Keohane and Nye, have argued about the importance of issue areas in terms of the fungibility of power resources. They, like us, note that in certain issue areas, which use the policy instruments we focus on, leaders may have more trouble bringing some of their power resources to bear than in other areas with other resources. Our analysis explains not only why these foreign policy instruments differ, but also why there may be low fungibility across instruments and why so-called high and

2000); engaging in unilateral action by issuing executive orders (Howell, 2003); and altering legislation by issuing signing statements (Savage, 2007).” Jackman, 2012, p. 4. Cites from original passage omitted.

39 Manning, 1977.

40 Schattschneider, 1935; Lowi, 1964; Wilson, 1973; Zimmerman, 1973; Almond, 1977; Keohane and Nye, 1977; Keohane, 1983; Keohane, 1986; Evangelista, 1989; Hinckley, 1994; Lindsay, 1994; Gowa, 1998; Gowa, 1999; Henehan, 2000; Lapinski, 2013.

41 Rosenau, 1967, p. 14.

42 For different attempts, see Brecher, Steinberg, and Stein, 1969; Mansbach and Vasquez, 1981, p. 35; Meernik, 1993, p. 585.

43 Peppers, 1975; Hughes, 1978; Evangelista, 1989, p. 150; Meernik, 1993, pp. 576–577.

CHAPTER 1

low politics are shaped the way they are. Presidents have more discretion over using military force not (solely) because of the nature of the external problem or threat, but because of domestic politics; high and low politics is just as much about the nature of domestic politics as it is about international relations.

We propose two criteria for understanding the politics surrounding different policy instruments. In particular, as developed in detail in chapter 2 and then illustrated throughout the rest of the book, we focus on (1) the extent to which a policy instrument engenders large costs and benefits for domestic actors—i.e., the extent of distributive politics, and (2) the extent of ideological divisions that are present. These characteristics exert an important influence on the president's ability to get what he wants. Both ideas and interests matter.

Our perspective is not entirely new. But one new feature is that we bring the scholarship in the field of international and comparative political economy to bear on this topic.⁴⁴ Much of this literature considers the distributional consequences of different policies. Relying on economic theory about the ways that policies affect incomes of different groups, the open economy politics (OEP) literature links the preferences of domestic groups for different policies given their distributional impacts.⁴⁵ This allows one to hypothesize about the policy preferences of different groups and to explore the impact of these groups on foreign policy making in a more rigorous fashion. These groups can lobby and provide information to Congress to impede or assist the president, often affecting the president's ability to use different policy instruments. Hence we link the preferences of domestic

44 See the open economy politics literature; for instance, the discussion of it by Frieden and Rogowski, and David Lake. Frieden and Rogowski, 1996; Lake, 2009.

45 Lake, 2009. A large literature on trade policy exists, which has examined on how various domestic groups define their policy preferences and how leaders respond to this. Schattschneider, 1935; Rogowski, 1987; Milner, 1988a; Magee, Brock, and Young, 1989; Lohmann and O'Halloran, 1994; Epstein and O'Halloran, 1996; Bailey, Goldstein, and Weingast, 1997; Scheve and Slaughter, 2001b; Hiscox, 2002b; McGillivray, 2004; Scheve and Slaughter, 2004; Chase, 2005; Hainmueller and Hiscox, 2006; Gawande, Krishna, and Olarreaga, 2009; Lü, Scheve, and Slaughter, 2010. A similar literature explores monetary and financial policy, examining how domestic groups and the state interact to produce policy. Gowa, 1988; Frieden, 1991; Broz, 2005. And immigration has recently come under study in a similar vein. The debate there has centered around whether economic interests are most important for defining preferences or whether other types of factors, like nationalism or culture, matter more. Citrin, Green, Muste, and Wong, 1997; O'Rourke and Sinnott, 2001; Scheve and Slaughter, 2001a; Mayda, 2006; Dustmann and Preston, 2007; Hainmueller and Hiscox, 2007; Hanson, Scheve, and Slaughter, 2007; Hainmueller and Hiscox, 2010; Tingley, 2013. Finally, a smaller literature exists that examines foreign aid. Lumsdaine, 1993; Therien and Noel, 2000; Fleck and Kilby, 2001; Noel and Therien, 2002; Fleck and Kilby, 2006; Bueno de Mesquita and Smith, 2007; Bueno de Mesquita and Smith, 2009; Milner and Tingley, 2010; Wright and Winters, 2010; Milner and Tingley, 2011; Paxton and Knack, 2012; Milner and Tingley, 2013a.

INTRODUCTION

interest groups and constituents to the foreign policies that the president is considering, and we show when and how these domestic influences can affect his ability to choose and substitute foreign policies. In a sense, we are adding the president's role to comparative and international political economy models. We are thus bringing foreign policy back into international political economy.

Our second innovation is to try to explain presidential power in foreign policy making. When does the president have the most influence? Under what conditions does he have the least? We show that his influence varies by policy instrument. Our answer focuses on how distributional and ideological politics drive congressional actors. Policies that create large and concentrated gains and/or losses for domestic groups weaken presidents because they create incentives for these groups—both winners and losers—to organize and lobby the government. They thus activate the electoral concerns of legislators and presidents. These policy instruments and the issue areas they impact look much like domestic political ones where the president is constrained by Congress. In areas with less distributive politics, as in more policies that entail more public goods, the president's role in setting policy is easier; few, if any, domestic actors have incentives to collect and transmit information and/or block the president's policy choices by lobbying Congress in this case. As we discuss later, ideological politics plays a similar role. Presidents will face strong opposition to using certain policy instruments and ideological divisions will also make it harder to substitute that instrument for another.

A third important feature of our book is the attention to the distribution of information about foreign policy within the US government. In the United States a large bureaucracy has developed over time that collects, analyzes, and feeds information to the executive branch. Characteristics of policy instruments and the issue areas they impact affect how much information presidents have about policies and their ramifications relative to other groups, like Congress. Foreign policies tend to generate information asymmetries between the president and other actors because the feedback loop between domestic constituents and interest groups and Congress is unavailable. We argue, however, that the extent of this asymmetry depends on the policy instrument. Does the president have access to resources that enable him to command much more information about a specific policy proposal than Congress has? Presidents may have both the constitutional prerogatives and the bureaucratic capacity to amass much more information than Congress or other social groups when it comes to policy instruments that generate few distributional incentives. These informational advantages enhance his ability to control policy choices. For other policy instruments, he will have much less advantage as distributional concerns make other actors willing to gather and transmit information.

CHAPTER 1

Policy Substitution

A second focus of our book, and one largely absent in the “two presidencies” literature as well as much of the comparative and international political economy literatures (including the issue area literature mentioned previously), flows naturally from the previous questions just discussed: policy substitution.⁴⁶ Policy instruments can be substitutes: for example, a country can offer foreign aid instead of using military force to try to resolve an international problem. As Most and Starr pointed out, policy substitutability means that leaders can use a variety of different policy instruments to achieve a similar goal.⁴⁷ This implies that any one problem can be addressed through different policy instruments. An ideal package of policies for any particular problem would allow for tradeoffs among the instruments at optimal marginal rates of substitution. As Clark et al. point out, “there are potentially many policy paths to any foreign policy goal, and leaders make their decisions based in large part on the costs associated with those policies.”⁴⁸ When and why does substitution happen, when does it fail to occur, and how do domestic politics affect this process?

More generally, what incentives do leaders have to substitute one policy for another? Why, for example, might a leader utilize economic sanctions instead of foreign aid or military intervention in order to coerce another state? Many scholars answer this question by looking mainly at the external environment and the likely reactions of other states,⁴⁹ whereas others see it as a mixture of international and domestic factors.⁵⁰ We focus more on domestic factors.

One interesting example to illuminate the role of domestic politics comes from US food aid to foreign countries. The quote at the start of this chapter gives a flavor of the issues involved with this type of instrument. Food aid from the United States is substantial, but it is delivered in an inefficient way if its goal is to reduce hunger abroad. Many scholars have concluded that such aid serves domestic economic interests and geopolitical ones rather than actually helping to reduce food shortages in poor coun-

46 “The foreign policy substitution argument generally posits that leaders choose foreign policies from a set of possible alternatives, depending on the circumstances they face at any given time; leaders have multiple policy tools from which to choose, and they will choose the policy tools they think are most likely to succeed.” Clark and Reed, 2005, p. 609. The major works are Most and Starr, 1984; Most and Starr, 1989; Bennett and Nordstrom, 2000; Morgan and Palmer, 2000; Palmer and Bhandari, 2000; Regan, 2000; Starr, 2000; Palmer, Wohlander, and Morgan, 2002.

47 Most and Starr, 1984; Most and Starr, 1989.

48 Clark, Nordstrom, and Reed, 2008, p. 765.

49 For example, Bennett and Nordstrom, 2000; Clark and Reed, 2005; Clark, Nordstrom, and Reed, 2008.

50 Regan, 2000, p. 104.

INTRODUCTION

tries.⁵¹ Fariss, for instance, asks, “why [is] food aid used in this way if other more powerful economic aid instruments are at the disposal of policy makers?”⁵² He immediately raises the issue of policy substitution. He shows that a central reason that food aid is deployed in a particular way by the United States is because of Congress. Congressional legislation that restricts what the president can do with economic aid and how he can use food aid have forced the president to turn to a peculiar method of disbursing food as a foreign policy instrument. As Fariss notes, “If the US Foreign Assistance Act or sanctions restrict the use of certain economic aid programs then policy-makers may consider food aid as a substitute.”⁵³ Highlighting our themes, this example shows that constraints on the president’s choices do exist, they are often domestic in origin, and they can even influence foreign policy in perverse ways.

What explains this? Domestic politics is our answer. The president makes choices about foreign policy with domestic considerations in mind. The economic interests of core constituents and their ideological preferences drive part of the choice of policy instruments. Problems in making the optimal substitution among policies are attributable in part to domestic politics. The president often cannot craft the ideal package of policies where he balances the costs and benefits of using different policy instruments because of domestic politics. Ideology plays an important role here, in addition to material interests and interest groups. Conflicts between liberals and conservatives, who for various reasons may prefer different types of instruments, can hinder the use of different combinations of them for addressing foreign policy problems. Both material and ideological constraints can thus influence policy substitution. In sum, presidential power and policy substitution are related. Where presidents are weak because of these constraints, policy substitution is much more difficult. Wielding different power resources in international politics is thus not only problematic because of the lack of fungibility of different policies at the international level, but also because of constraints associated with domestic politics.⁵⁴

Given our focus on substitution, it is helpful to dispense with a common misunderstanding of what drives the use of particular foreign policy instruments over others. Some argue that the specific details of an international event determine what policy instruments should be used. If a situation

51 See, e.g., Wallerstein, 1980; Ball and Johnson, 1996; Zahariadis, Travis, and Ward, 2000; Neumayer, 2005.

52 Fariss, 2010, p. 108.

53 Ibid.

54 Of course policy instruments can also be thought of as being complements. In many cases this might be the case. However, we note that our same arguments apply in this case, as an optimal complement might be blocked for the same domestic political reasons, and that ultimately budget constraints will force some degree of substitution.

CHAPTER 1

poses a security threat, it deserves a military answer. We believe this view is dangerously misleading, as do others.⁵⁵ We of course do not suggest that presidents should consider signing trade agreements with terrorist organizations in lieu of conducting military operations. How an international problem or threat is defined and which bureaucracies and instruments are considered for addressing it are critical issues in shaping a country's foreign policy. Non-military instruments are almost always useful—sometimes alone and other times as part of a larger foreign policy package. Indeed, throughout the book we engage with arguments about the need for US foreign policy to be broad-based in any situation. But, to be able to do so, domestic support is necessary. Even in situations that pose a national security threat to the United States, it might be wise to substitute away from some military instruments of statecraft and toward instruments like trade and economic aid. Our brief example of US-Pakistan relations following 9/11 at the start of this chapter illustrates this. Whether US domestic politics allows this substitution—or complementary use of many instruments—is the more interesting question, and one that we take up throughout the book.

Overview of Our Theory

We examine a key requirement for the conduct of foreign policy: how American presidents extract and direct resources from the domestic political system to meet international challenges.⁵⁶ As realists acknowledge, “International imperatives are filtered through the medium of state structure and affected by how top officials assess likely threats, identified viable strategies in response to those threats, and ultimately extracted and mobilized the societal resources necessary to implement and sustain those strategies . . . Unit-level variables constrain or facilitate the ability of all types of states—great powers as well as lesser states—to respond to systemic imperatives.”⁵⁷ Domestic political institutions are critical to this process. The set of political institutions in the United States that constitutes the policy-making process is unique and has been rather stable over time. The distinctive package of American institutions, including a presidency, the separation of powers, a two-party system, and executive bargaining with Congress over resources, has not changed much over the past thirty years. Ideological polarization may have increased, and the committee system in Congress may have evolved.⁵⁸ But the critical institutions and overarching institutional framework remain the

55 Campbell, 2014; DeGennaro, 2014; Holshek, 2014.

56 Taliaferro, Lobell, and Ripsman, 2009, pp. 3–4.

57 Ibid.

58 See Lindsay and Ripley for changes in the 1970s and 1980s. Lindsay and Ripley, 1992, pp. 427–429.

INTRODUCTION

same. And despite changes during the era we study, American foreign policy has remained oriented to an internationalist program. There have been ups and downs in the degree of unilateralism in its policies, but there has been continuity overall. Thus we focus on differences across policy instruments and in the overall package of policies chosen.

Our theory looks at two characteristics of policy instruments to understand how presidential power across foreign policy instruments varies. First, we examine the degree of distributive politics associated with each instrument. High levels of distributive politics are found where policies generate large, concentrated economic losses and gains for domestic groups. For these policies, Congress, interest groups, and the public may all be motivated to be active, lobbying and transmitting information for and against the president's position.⁵⁹ Some groups may favor the president's preferred policy and others may oppose it, setting up the conditions for strong political contestation. This will then have an impact on the distribution of information about the policy and will likely further weaken the president's ability to use this instrument.

A second characteristic of importance is the extent of ideological divisions. The greater these divisions are, the more conflict among domestic groups, and the harder it is for the president to control policy. Actors with the opposing ideological preferences will be more highly motivated to resist the president's preferred policies. In sum, for instruments fraught with distributive politics and ideological differences, presidents will be the weakest and least able to adopt the foreign policies they desire. Our main hypothesis then is that where distributive politics is muted and ideological divisions are low, presidents will have the greatest room for influence. In chapter 2, we spell out these conditions and the hypotheses that flow from them in greater detail.

Presidential power affects the ability of presidents to substitute one type of policy for another. The dynamic of policy substitution is obscured by much previous work in IR and IPE that focuses on one issue area or policy instrument at a time (e.g., see literature on trade, finance, military force).⁶⁰ Foreign policy instruments are often interrelated. Trade and aid policy were intimately linked in discussions about engagement with regions like Africa and the Caribbean. And military or economic aid can be used in lieu of

59 Lindsay comes close to our position when he notes that foreign policy can be divided into three types of policies. One of these is similar to our category of policies that are highly distributive and asymmetric, where Congress plays the largest role. Lindsay, 1994, p. 156.

60 Hiscox, 2002; Frieden, 1991; Howell and Pevehouse, 2007. Many studies of public opinion on foreign policy focus on a particular issue area or policy instrument. For instance, a sizable literature exists on public attitudes toward international trade. Scheve and Slaughter, 2001b; Beaulieu, 2002a; Mendelsohn, Wolfe, and Parkin, 2002; Mayda and Rodrik, 2005; Hiscox, 2006; Mansfield and Mutz, 2009.

CHAPTER 1

military deployment.⁶¹ Indeed, a major reason to depart from the issue area approach is to better understand the substitution of one policy instrument for another, which may depend substantially on domestic politics. In particular, the ability to substitute one policy for another will depend on the degree of preference overlap between supporters of different policy instruments and how influential the president is.

Theories of foreign policy often argue that substitutability among policies is high; one policy instrument can be used for many purposes and many policies can substitute for each other to achieve the same goal.⁶² If legislators, interest groups, the president, and members of the public all had the same preferences, then substitution would be easy; there would be no political costs to it. But if there are different coalitions around different policy areas, then shifting to different policy instruments may be more difficult. Politics plays out differently for each of them. The president's ability to substitute one policy instrument for another greatly depends on the nature of these politics. Not all power resources of a country can be used in any instance; domestic politics may render some too politically costly for political leaders to employ at times. If they operate consistently, such domestic constraints may bias foreign policy toward some instruments more than others.

Our theory suggests a further implication. Substitutability not only depends on the possibilities of forming coalitions, but also on the president's influence. In areas where the policy has large, concentrated costs and benefits and interest groups are thus very active, the president's influence will be limited: his ability to freely substitute will be constrained because different domestic groups will oppose and support his preferred policies. It will also be much more limited if the ideological divisions surrounding the policy instruments are large. That is, if the groups that support and oppose policies have strong ideological bases for their views that divide them, then the president's ability to substitute will be extremely limited. He will have to forge new coalitions across the ideological divisions in the policy areas, and forging these new coalitions will be difficult and costly. Differing material consequences and ideological predispositions toward policy instruments shape the president's influence and thus his ability to use them in place of one another.

Our theory brings together material and ideological sources of preferences. Both ideas and economic interests matter in shaping the politics of

61 For instance, in an analysis of US efforts to deal with the rise of terrorist groups in Africa, the *New York Times* notes one such set of choices: "Wary of committing a large number of troops, the United States has sought to use more diplomatic and development instruments than military force in Africa." Shanker and Schmitt, 2011, p. A8. As we note in chapter 7, this wariness was soon overridden and the United States began a much more military-oriented strategy, in part because of domestic constraints on the economic strategies.

62 Most and Starr, 1984; Palmer and Bhandari, 2000.

INTRODUCTION

foreign policy. We show this in our various empirical chapters. Our study does not examine the origins of these ideas; instead we explore more which policy instruments have greater and fewer ideological divisions associated with them. These ideas sometimes crosscut actors' material interests and this makes them a more independent source of political action. But ideas and interests both contribute to the politics surrounding foreign policy in our view.

Implications for US Foreign Policy

Internationalism and American Grand Strategy

Why does the choice of foreign policy instrument matter? Our focus on the politics around specific foreign policy instruments is anything but microscopic. Instead, it informs broader debates about the direction of US foreign policy. We care about presidential power in foreign policy because it affects the overall direction of American policy. Since World War II, presidents have been the prime proponents of a grand strategy of international engagement, sometimes labeled "liberal internationalism." The debate about the persistence and success of this strategy turns on presidential power and the use of a variety of foreign policy instruments.

American policy has followed a liberal internationalist grand strategy since World War II. Defining liberal internationalism is a difficult task.⁶³ We adopt a definition of it based on the consensual elements of the term as used by mainstream scholars.⁶⁴ "Liberal internationalism" implies two features of a foreign policy: first, that the country engages with other nations as opposed to being isolationist; and second, that it pursues an agenda that involves promoting "open markets, international institutions, cooperative security, democratic community, progressive change, collective problem solving, shared sovereignty, and the rule of law."⁶⁵

The instruments that can be used in pursuit of an internationalist strategy span military and economic ones. Yet without understanding the politics around these policy instruments, we have little insight into the future trajectory of this long tradition. Recent work has questioned whether the United States will retreat from its sixty-year-old policy of "deep engagement," which is necessary to protect a liberal world order.⁶⁶ One question

63 Busby and Montan, 2008.

64 Holsti, 2004; Kupchan and Trubowitz, 2007; Busby and Montan, 2008; Ikenberry, 2009.

65 Ikenberry, 2009, p. 71. Some have disaggregated internationalism into cooperative and militant forms. Wittkopf, 1986. Others into multilateral and unilateral forms. Claude and Nuechterlein, 1997, p. 125. Whichever version one prefers, there is a strong consensus that such internationalism has been a defining characteristic of US policy.

66 Brooks, Ikenberry, and Wohlforth, 2012; Craig, Friedman, Green, et al., 2013.

CHAPTER 1

often raised is whether this policy direction can or will change.⁶⁷ Will the United States become isolationist, as it was prior to World War II? American domestic politics is crucial to the maintenance of its internationalist policy and its deep engagement with the rest of the world. Specifically, the ability of the president to extract and direct significant amounts of resources to foreign policy is critical to maintaining the US posture of liberal internationalism. But American domestic institutions shape when and whether the president can muster the resources to engage abroad. Many scholars believe that the domestic requirements for sustaining such a policy require support from a large majority of the public and a bipartisan coalition in Congress.

To pursue a liberal internationalist policy, a president needs broad domestic support because such a policy necessitates costly, long-term strategies that involve credible commitments to mutual adjustments of policies among countries (i.e., cooperation). Support in Congress is thus necessary for several reasons. First, a liberal internationalist policy depends on the use of treaties and other international agreements that require explicit legislative support, sometimes supermajorities. Trade and investment agreements, military alliances, overseas military bases and operations, foreign aid, and economic sanctions all require congressional consent. Second, sustaining commitments to multilateral partners implies that continuity over time matters. A policy of foreign engagement through multilateral cooperation requires a long-term commitment by domestic constituencies. Third, a liberal internationalist policy agenda requires that substantial resources be allocated from domestic sources to fund overseas commitments. Congressional approvals of such spending and public support for it will be more difficult for some policy instruments compared to others.

The types of policies that comprise liberal internationalism are intended to promote an open capitalist economy, democracy, and stability. Our attention to the debate about liberal internationalism is related to our attempt to understand the choices made among the set of foreign policy instruments that are necessary for international engagement: international trade, economic aid, immigration, geopolitical aid, sanctions, domestic military spending, and military deployments. An inability, for instance, to be able to use trade policy because of domestic constraints would erode a liberal internationalist grand strategy. The president's desire to use these types of policies, and Congress's willingness to go along with them, signals a commitment to a grand strategy of liberal internationalism. But a departure from liberal internationalism could happen, for example, if the president was unable to muster the resources necessary to sustain such a policy because of domestic political constraints.

67 See Chaudoin, Milner, and Tingley, 2010; Kupchan and Trubowitz, 2010.

INTRODUCTION

Presidents, as we point out, tend to accept the need for such international engagement. But Congress, interest groups, and the public may be more skeptical. In chapter 4 we look directly at the influences on legislators' choices about policies for and against international engagement. For each policy area, we show the factors that seem to push legislators toward more engagement and those that push them away from it. Our theory highlights the main influences on this. In chapter 6 on the public and in chapter 7 on case study research we also show which types of factors are related to more pro-international engagement. In sum, we demonstrate that our theory has important implications for the continued pursuit of liberal internationalism by the United States.

Militarization

Some observers posit that the United States's external position as a superpower and its domestic institutions have led to the militarization of its foreign policy since World War II.⁶⁸ By militarization, we mean the injection of military planning and instruments of statecraft into all aspects of foreign policy making.⁶⁹ As Bacevich notes, it is "the tendency to see all international problems as military problems and to discount the likelihood of finding a solution except through military means."⁷⁰ It implies a heavy emphasis on the military capabilities of states and their deployment. And it relies on a tendency to define all foreign policy problems in terms of security threats that depend on the military and threats of force for their resolution. The simultaneous analysis of multiple foreign policy instruments in this book is crucial in light of these claims about militarization.

Militarization has at least five important aspects. It means the military forms a regular and critical part of the institutional establishment for foreign policy making. As we discuss later, the bureaucracy and its capacity matters for foreign policy. When the military has an overwhelming bureaucratic position relative to other agencies, it can exert much influence, both in problem definition as well as policy choice and implementation. It also implies that the military occupies a central element of the budgetary allocations for foreign policy. It furthermore acts as a principal means or instrument for realizing foreign policy goals.⁷¹ Policy instruments controlled by the military become the "go to" instruments for every problem. Militarization takes on a

68 Sherry, 1995; Bacevich, 2002; Bacevich, 2007; Bacevich, 2010.

69 Constructivists employ a similar concept called "securitization." Waever, 1995; Buzan, Wæver, and de Wilde, 1998; Williams, 2003.

70 Bacevich, 2005, p. 2.

71 In recent literature on conflict and war initiation, militarization means "state decisions on which fraction of their resources they allocate toward military assets," primarily weapons, troops, and infrastructure necessary for using them. Debs and Monteiro, 2014, p. 6. For

CHAPTER 1

central and powerful role in all decision making about foreign policy. Military leaders come to occupy key positions in the foreign policy decision-making process. And, critically, the use or threat of force dominates problem definition in foreign policy making. Every foreign issue comes to be defined as a military one or one best subject to military resolution. Such militarization has strong institutional foundations throughout the government.

If militarization happens during periods of time or has happened in general over time, then domestic politics may matter much in explaining the militarization of American foreign policy because such politics makes some policies easier to enact than others. We show that the president has more capability to shape the use of military and national intelligence instruments than other foreign policy instruments, which *may* lead to an overreliance on military instruments of statecraft. These differences among policy instruments have critical implications. Some of these instruments, such as geopolitical aid and deployments, allow the president greater freedom from domestic constraints and thus a greater ability to use them for foreign engagement and as substitutes for other foreign policy instruments. For any foreign policy problem then, the president may be tempted to use military instruments of statecraft because doing so may make it easier to persuade Congress to authorize. Other instruments may face greater contestation among domestic groups and hence legislative constraints and less presidential discretion. Domestic politics may bias foreign policy toward a dependence on military instruments of statecraft. Thus while non-military means of statecraft may be less expensive to employ and sometimes more likely to yield positive results in international affairs, presidents may choose not to use them because of their greater domestic political costs.

Militarization in our view is not necessarily a process that has to unfold over time. It may be a process affecting decision making at each point in time. Consider an international problem at any given point in time. The president has choices among different instruments to use to address this problem. The net costs vary by instrument. If much of the time the military option is less costly domestically, it may be more likely to be chosen. Think of this calculation holding the international costs and benefits of each instrument constant. If the domestic political costs of different foreign policy instruments vary in much the same way for each country and problem, then for each choice the president is more likely to choose the military option. If this happens over and over again with each new international problem the country faces, the result is militarization.

One indicator of the militarization of US foreign policy is the relative size of the Defense Department and related intelligence agencies compared

other discussions, see Slantchev, 2005; Meirowitz and Ramsay, 2010; Slantchev, 2011; Bas and Coe, 2012.

INTRODUCTION

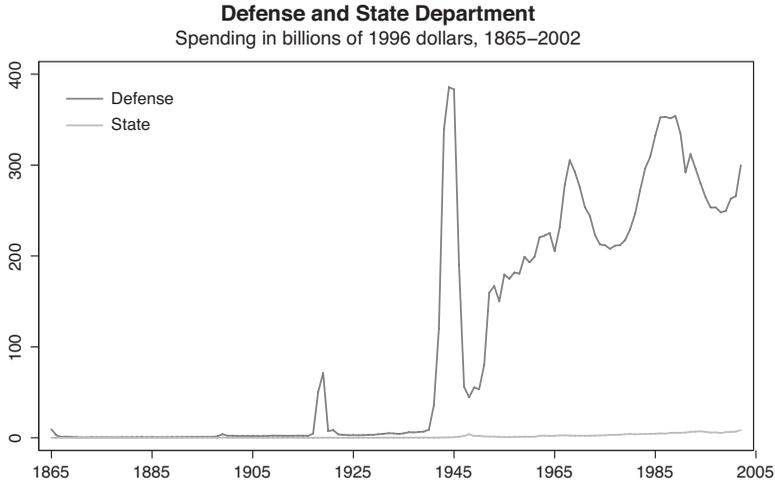


Figure 1.1. Department of Defense and State Department spending over time. Data show increasing trend over time in DoD spending but not State Department.

to the departments of State and Treasury. Given budget constraints, the dominant role of the military in the American foreign policy process occurs largely to the detriment of the State and Treasury departments, which are responsible for many of the non-military instruments of statecraft. Looking over time, one can see the way in which individual decisions may cumulate into a very asymmetric outcome. Figure 1.1 shows that since World War II, annual spending by the Defense Department dwarfs that of the State Department; and figure 1.2 shows employee numbers, excluding the military itself, for the main foreign policy bureaucracies, again suggesting Defense Department dominance in US foreign policy since World War II.

Why does militarization occur? Again, we argue that American political institutions are an important part of the answer. And why are the domestic costs and benefits likely to create a bias in favor of military means? We claim it is because the president has more discretion and more information relative to military instruments. Congress can't constrain the president so much as on other instruments where distributional issues arise, interest groups conflict with one another and intervene with Congress, and ideological battles break out. And the president has a bureaucracy that has been built up to provide him with information which gives him a strong advantage in the domestic political game.

Our theory then can help explain decisions leading to militarization. Militarization implies some kind of failure of policy substitution; it implies that one is using military force beyond its point of highest utility. The

CHAPTER 1

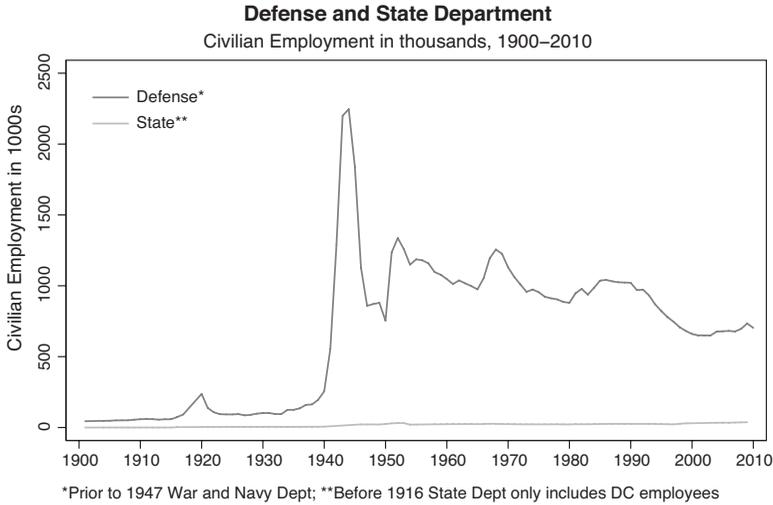


Figure 1.2. Civilian employment in Department of Defense and State Department over time. Data show roughly flat employment in DoD post-1950 that is markedly greater than State Department employment.

difficulty of foreign policy substitution in the American political system has been such that military means and solutions become easier for the president to employ. Other instruments might be more effective internationally to use at this point. And as other research has shown, such investment in and use of military means may lead to greater international problems and increase the likelihood of war.⁷² While our empirical focus is not on militarization as such, it is an important implication of our theory.

In our view, the militarization that has occurred since the end of World War II has as much to do with domestic politics as with international relations.⁷³ As one analyst of the military wrote years ago, “Given the complexities involved, it is plausible that the actual military capabilities which the US has maintained . . . owe more to the end products of the bureaucratic and Executive-Congressional politics of acquisition policy than they do to the formal guidelines . . . associated with the strategic doctrines of sufficiency, equivalence, and countervailing power.”⁷⁴ The distinct political coalitions that undergird different foreign policy instruments make policy substitution in the US political system problematic and help explain the domestic pressures for militarization.

72 Debs and Monteiro, 2014.

73 Clark and Reed point to more international factors in influencing policy substitution, although they do mention domestic politics. Clark and Reed, 2005.

74 Schilling, 1981, pp. 65–66.

INTRODUCTION

Organization of the Book

The book consists of eight chapters in total, five of which present empirical evidence examining our hypotheses. Our empirical chapters all draw on distinct types of data; together these give a comprehensive view of the US foreign policy process. Each chapter focuses on a different aspect of the process and on different sets of agents. We use these to explore foreign policy instruments from different angles. But in each one we seek to provide evidence for our main hypotheses, which we lay out in the next chapter.

Chapter 2 presents our theory. It engages with the debate about the role of the president and US foreign policy. We lay out arguments for why the debate about “two presidencies” is misconstrued because presidential power varies substantially across foreign policy instruments. Our theory highlights that the president’s influence is moderated by the extent to which a policy instrument is characterized by two factors: (1) large distributional consequences that provide concentrated costs or benefits for domestic groups (versus public goods types of qualities), and (2) ideological divisions. We then argue that the degree of distributive politics partially accounts for the extent of informational asymmetries in favor of the executive for some policy instruments but not others. We derive several testable hypotheses from this theoretical framework. Given this theoretical structure and our hypotheses, it is important to focus on a range of core actors in our empirical chapters: interest groups, Congress, the bureaucracy, and the public. Furthermore, we also address important alternative explanations, such as those that focus on the international system as driving foreign policy and the role of the Constitution in hard-wiring in the subsequent politics we observe.

In chapter 3 we turn attention to interest groups and US foreign policy, with a focus on the extent of distributive politics present for different policy instruments.⁷⁵ We claim that for policy instruments where organized groups can obtain large, concentrated benefits or may have to pay large costs, economic interest groups will be active and lobby fiercely. Interest groups will have an incentive to collect information, testify before and lobby Congress, bypassing the White House, in order to overcome the executive’s informational advantages. We aim to show how interest group activity varies across

75 This is important for us because interest groups are intimately linked to particular policy instruments. As Mahoney and Baumgartner point out, lobbying behavior varies not just by the interest group but that the same group may behave differently in different contexts as determined by the institutional structure and by the characteristics of a particular issue. Mahoney and Baumgartner, 2008, p. 1264. This interaction between political institutions, issue areas, and interest group characteristics is critical to recognize. Many studies of individual foreign policies show the importance of interest groups. Jacobs and Page, 2005, p. 121. Interest groups of different types matter differentially across policy arenas, and interest groups target different political actors in different issue areas. Our study shows this in a new way.

CHAPTER 1

our core policy instruments (immigration, trade, economic aid, domestic military spending, sanctions, geopolitical aid, and military deployments). One way we do this is by exploring when the White House is more likely to be bypassed. Our hypothesis is that the president is less likely to be bypassed by interest groups when the issue has fewer distributive politics and ideological divisions associated with it. If interest groups are rational, then such targeting of lobbying should be evident if our theory is correct. To do this, chapter 3 draws on a rich new dataset of lobbying activity reports, which we analyze to understand who is lobbying whom in different areas of foreign policy issue. We are unable to pinpoint the preferred policy of each interest group in this process, but we generally know that for the instruments with high levels of distributive politics, groups will tend to form both in favor of and opposition to the policy.

In chapter 4 we turn to the Congress and its relationship with the president. We explore presidential power across policy instruments here in terms of whether the president can realize his preferences in legislation in Congress. In chapter 2 we state our hypotheses about when the president will be most influential and in chapter 4 we examine them empirically. Our hypothesis is that the president should be most powerful when issues have fewer distributive politics and ideological divisions. We examine two different types of data about elite behavior: agency budget data comparing presidential requests to congressional allocations, and roll call voting in the US Congress. Our focus on budgetary dynamics between Congress and the president follows earlier work in the American politics literature that uses differences in presidential budget requests for executive agencies and congressional budget allocations to assess whether the president has more influence in foreign versus domestic affairs.⁷⁶ We also examine both the universe of House votes on foreign affairs from 1953 to 2008, as well as carefully selected important votes on all of our foreign policy instruments for the House from 1979 to 2008. Our analysis of this data shows how the influence of the president, as well as local constituency-level factors and ideological divisions, varies across different types of foreign policy, providing support for our theory in chapter 2. We expect this variation in support to affect his ability to substitute policies, which the case study findings in chapter 7 make evident.

In chapter 5 we focus on the design and historical evolution of the US foreign policy bureaucracy. Relatively few studies of American foreign policy focus on the bureaucracy.⁷⁷ Here we inquire whether the patterns

76 Canes-Wrone, Howell, and Lewis, 2008.

77 There are notable exceptions. Allison, 1969; Destler, 1972; Krasner, 1972; Art, 1973; Bendor and Hammond, 1992; Drezner, 2000; Halperin and Clapp, 2006. And accompanying debate on their role. McCubbins, Noll, and Weingast, 1987; McCubbins, Noll, and Weingast, 1989; Lindsay, 1992.

INTRODUCTION

of presidential power that we theorize about are also present in the bureaucracy. From our theory we expect that Congress should play a much stronger role over bureaus that deal with instruments having substantial distributive politics and ideological divisions, which applies to trade and economic aid in contrast to military deployments and geopolitical aid. We demonstrate the importance of control over information as well as changing patterns of relative influence in bureaucracies over time.

In chapter 6 we focus on public opinion and US foreign policy and whether it comports with the two elements of our theory. First, we ask whether empirical support exists for the way we classify policy instruments and whether in doing so presidential influence is seen to vary as suggested in chapter 2. Specifically, we inquire whether the public sees greater or less information asymmetries between the president and Congress across our policy instruments and whether the president or Congress has more control over each instrument. Second, we provide evidence for the degree of ideological divisions across different instruments. Using public opinion data, we characterize which groups support and oppose the difference policy choices for engaging with the international system and how sizable those differences are. This examination allows us to show that our coding of instruments in chapter 2 is borne out to some extent by evidence from the public's views. The public understands that foreign policy instruments differ, and they too recognize the differences that we attribute to these areas. This gives us more confidence that we have identified differences that are perceptible and that matter. The findings provide some micro-foundations for our arguments about when and why the president has a greater ability to exert influence over policy.

In chapter 7 we present an extensive case study of US foreign policy in order to explore our theory and hypotheses in greater detail. We focus on US policy toward Sub-Saharan Africa from 1993–2009, over the course of two presidencies. We detail how the presidents tried to use various policy instruments to deal with the serious problems arising in Africa after the end of the Cold War. We show how domestic cleavages around ideology and material interests in the United States shaped debates and the president's choice of policies, and how control of information by the president was important in this process. The case provides detailed illustrations of the main themes we developed earlier in the book.

Throughout the book, we focus on different policy instruments. For some types of data we can investigate all of the instruments of interest, but in others we are more limited. Table 1.1 gives an overview by chapter of the types of foreign policy instruments we engage with. We emphasize that all of our empirical chapters face different types of limitations, which we discuss both within the chapters but also in concluding. But as a whole the different types of data help to reinforce each other. For example, while Congress

CHAPTER 1

Table 1.1. Policy Instruments Covered in Each Chapter

POLICY TOOL	CHAPTER 3	CHAPTER 4	CHAPTER 5	CHAPTER 6	CHAPTER 7
Economic aid	★	★	★	★	★
Trade	★	★	★	★	★
Immigration	★	★		★	
Sanctions	★	★			
Domestic military spending	★	★	★	★	
Geopolitical aid	★	★	★	★	★
Military deployments	★	★	★	★	★

Because of data availability, not all policy instruments are featured in each chapter.

may determine who testifies before Congress, it has less control over who lobbies and on what. And while presidential position taking on roll call voting might be fraught with strategic interaction on a vote-by-vote basis, our work on the institutional design of bureaucracies is less affected by such strategic position taking. We argue that as a whole our argument best fits this variety of data.

Conclusion

For sixty-plus years, guarding America's interests abroad has taken the form of pursuing an internationalist agenda. To do so, presidents have used the types of foreign policy instruments that we focus on: international trade, economic aid, immigration, domestic military spending, geopolitical aid, sanctions, and military deployment policies. These policies have allowed him to engage with the rest of the world in order to secure and advance American interests. The designation of high and low politics does not adequately explain the choice of these different types of policies. Our theory shows why as a result of domestic politics foreign policy instruments and presidential power over them differ. This matters because American grand strategy depends on the president's ability to use all of these instruments. As Skålnes notes more generally, foreign economic policy is an important element of grand strategy, and these instruments are at times equally if not

INTRODUCTION

more important than military means.⁷⁸ We see the two-level game of foreign policy in the United States then being played domestically through the different preferences, ideologies, and information sets that the executive and other domestic political actors hold.

In our focus on different policy instruments, we, of course, do not dismiss the role of changes over time. There have been a number of secular trends unfolding over the course of our study. One is the growing inequality and partisan polarization within the United States.⁷⁹ Another is more external and relates to globalization, or the integration of the US national economy into a much larger global one. The US economy is still heavily domestic in its orientation, with total US trade equaling less than one-third of GDP, but it has become much more globalized in the past thirty years, as have most other economies. There have also been significant changes in the threats and structure of the international system in the roughly thirty-year period from the end of the Vietnam War era to the end of the George W. Bush administration, which is our primary focus. First, the end of the Cold War occurred in the middle of it (1989–1991), and then the start of the War of Terror in 2001 marked a turning point. Despite these changes, little about the American external position has changed over this thirty-year period. US GDP as a percentage of world GDP has stayed close to 30% during the entire time; US trade as a percentage of world trade has stayed between 12% to 15% consistently; and US military expenditures as a percentage of total world military expenditures ranged around 35% during the period, except for the five years right after the fall of the USSR.⁸⁰ Its external position thus has not dramatically shifted.

While America's external position did not shift greatly in this period, it is still worth asking whether changes in the threats and structure of the international system have affected US foreign policy, and whether they have influenced presidential power. We would argue the answer is yes. But this bears on our claims only insofar as these trends have changed the dynamics as to how the United States makes foreign policy with different policy instruments. We consider this possibility. Foreclosing a focus on issue areas and policy instrument differences, however, by stipulating that the interesting political variation is due to temporal changes ignores the rich political dynamics that we theorize about and then document.

78 Skålnes, 2000. Brian Pollins notes how “it will be interesting to see whether the United States formulates a new grand strategy that makes meaningful, long-term economic concessions in trade, aid, investment, and technology transfer—especially toward poor nations now on the front lines of this conflict.” Pollins, 2002, p. 477.

79 McCarty, Poole, and Rosenthal, 2006.

80 Prior to this period there is some variation in US military spending and higher GDP in the 1960s.

CHAPTER 1

While our approach emphasizes domestic politics, it does not neglect the international system and its influences. The president is the main conduit for such pressures to enter foreign policy considerations. This is one reason why presidents have been the main advocates for a liberal internationalist strategy in the United States since World War II, much as in the two-level games literature we see the executive as the focal point for international and domestic influences.⁸¹ The executive branch is where international and domestic politics collide and commingle. The president generally is more sensitive to the pressures and opportunities of the international environment. His standing depends in part on being seen as a competent leader of the country in international affairs and in protecting American national security.⁸² The average congressperson is less likely to be judged or held accountable for these international outcomes than is the president. Yet, as we show throughout the rest of the book, Congress can wield considerable power in many areas of foreign policy. Presidents are simultaneously at the center of foreign policy, but can also be highly constrained.

81 Putnam, 1988; Milner, 1997.

82 Murphy and Topel, 2013.